

b. Positively. "But with demonstration of the Spirit and of power." The word, "demonstration," is a clear showing forth produced in the hearer's mind by a sudden lifting of a veil. It is a conviction which masters him and it is done by the Holy Spirit! The Spirit acts at once in the preacher and hearer so as to make the light pass through the spoken word from one mind to another. So as to allay any fears, Paul adds it was "by power." This is a technical term for a proof drawn from facts or documents. No theoretical reasoning here, but the Word and the Spirit! This is the ONLY method God has offered!

5. PAUL'S AIM v. 5.

Purpose is marked by the particle, "that." The concern of Paul is "faith." It must be in one of two directions:

a. Wisdom of man. This, Paul disclaims.

b. Power of God. This, Paul claims.

Paul knows that a faith founded on logical arguments. Hence, he aimed at founding their faith on the power of God -- conviction of sin and a personal appropriation of Salvation through Christ. Only the Holy Spirit can produce this by taking hold and possessing the human soul, understanding, and will. The result is the same as mentioned earlier (1:29-31).

CONCLUSION: We are not ministering this Word of God to please the crowd or tickle the ears, but to present the truth of God. Where does your faith stand now? To be of any eternal value, it must be in the power of God, even our Lord Jesus Christ and His Cross (1:18, 23). Amen.

THE BOOK OF FIRST CORINTHIANS

"Paul's Aim"

I Corinthians 2:1-5

Introduction

1. It is evident that Paul did not hide anything from his readers. He was forward in all of his relations with the children of God.
2. The first chapter has made it forever clear (for those who really want to read it properly) that the nature of the Gospel from the world's vantage point is foolishness--it is not a philosophy. Nor are the Corinthian believers philosophers. Hence, it cannot be expected that Paul's mission to that city was any different in its specific character.
3. Just how did Paul fulfill his commission to preach the Gospel to those at Corinth? The answer is given in the verses of the text. There are five outstanding thoughts expressed:

i. PAUL'S BEARING v. 1.

The opening word of the verse is a compound which notes that message, hearers, and preacher all matched each other for folly and feebleness. The "and I" puts Paul in with the Gospel and the Corinthians. The verb, "came" is repeated twice to emphasize Paul's arrival. It directs one's attention back to the original work (Acts 18).

Two items are mentioned to show how Paul did NOT come:

- a. With excellency of speech. This phrase refers to the fact that he did not exhibit rhetorical displays. There was no emphasis upon the preeminent item for his success!
- b. With philosophical subtlety. This is the force of the word, "wisdom." With his education, he could easily have propounded such, but he didn't.

What did Paul do positively? The answer is given in sharp and definitive patterns: He declared the mystery

of God! The verb "declare" notes an authoritative declaring. It is only found in Acts and Paul's letters of the New Testament. He spoke as one through whom God Himself spoke (cf. 1:23). Some very good MSS have the word, "mystery," for the term, "testimony," and it certainly seems to have the better sense in this text. Paul was loaded with a brand new message: Jews and Gentiles were now one in the Body of Christ (cf. Eph. 3:6 and Rom. 16:25). What a fabulous message this is.

2. PAUL'S THEME v. 2.

The AV rendering here is a bit difficult and does not leave the full force of the original. It would be better to render it: "I did not decide to know...." Paul did not feel it fit or his business to decide for anything, but one simple message! Here is a practical and moral judgment and resolution. It would be wise for many a modern preacher to take Paul's word as an example. What do preachers really do? What is their basic concern? The word, "know," is nothing less than the verb for innate knowledge. He did not play the part of a philosopher nor a "know-something." He just preached what God had intended (Acts 9:15, 16, 20). What does it include:

- a. The Person of Christ. This is the meaning of the phrase, "Jesus Christ." The former name speaks of His humanity and the latter of His deity as the Anointed One from Glory. Unless one speaks of the ineffable glory of Jesus as perfect God and perfect Man in one blessed Person, forever co-equal with Father and Holy Spirit as the One true and eternal God, he apostatizes from the Biblical estimation of the Person of our Lord!
- b. The Work of Christ. This is surely the significance of the phrase, "Him crucified." The perfect passive participle should read, "This One as crucified." This reminds one of the center of the Gospel message (1:18). Paul

stuck to this after they laughed him to scorn in Athens. It would be the main stumbling-block to the Corinthians, but Paul emphasized it!

3. PAUL'S TEMPER v. 3.

Paul had been in prison at Philippi. He was driven out of Thessalonica and Berea. He bowed out at Athens. It is not strange, therefore, that he shrank from the hard conditions at Corinth. Cool complacency is not the mood generally found in the finer preachers. So, he states: "I was with you...." The verb is better translated, "became." The preposition speaks of intimacy (cf. John 1:1 for the same preposition). Hence, out of the conditions which Paul met at Corinth, he notes he was there (these terms are all listed before the verb for emphasis):

- a. With weakness. This is not a physical item because the verb suggests it came upon him at Corinth. Probably a sense of deep weakness which determined his conduct.
- b. With fear. This noun is a generic term for fear. It is usually protracted.
- c. With trembling. This noun speaks of a predominately physical experience. It is the only one with the adjective, "much."

4. PAUL'S METHOD v. 4.

What Paul is noting here is his speech (which is what he said) and his preaching (his specific pronouncements on the Gospel). Both were mentioned earlier (1:18, 21, 23). They were:

- a. Negatively. "Not with enticing words of man's wisdom." The term, "enticing," speaks of plausible words. It is used only here in the New Testament, but a similar word is found in Col. 2:4 of the Gnostic's plausible philosophy. Corinth put a premium on what many do today -- the veneer of false rhetoric and thin thinking!